



## **CITY OF ROANOKE**

### **OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER**

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July 5, 2005

Honorable C. Nelson Harris, Mayor  
Honorable Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., Vice Mayor  
Honorable M. Rupert Cutler, Council Member  
Honorable Alfred T. Dowe, Jr., Council Member  
Honorable Sherman P. Lea, Council Member  
Honorable Brenda L. McDaniel, Council Member  
Honorable Brian J. Wishneff, Council Member

Dear Mayor Harris and Members of City Council:

Subject: VDSS Program Improvement  
Plan; Increase in Child Welfare  
Staff Complement

#### **Background:**

The federal government's Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) project has conducted exhaustive studies of each state's implementation of its child welfare programs. The reviews assessed seven program outcomes and seven systemic factors in the delivery of child protective services, foster care, adoptions and family preservation services. Each state is required to submit a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address areas where specific national performance standards were not met. Each locality must in turn develop its own PIP. Virginia's PIP was approved in 2004, and the state legislature has approved funding for the implementation of local plans. The amount allocated by the state to the City of Roanoke is \$195,131. This amount includes the required 20% local match of \$39,026 and is for the state FY 2006. PIP funds will be allocated in a separate state budget line for both FY 2006 and then in FY 2007. In FY 2008 the funding will be included in our base allocation provided the targets established in the local PIP are met.

#### **Considerations:**

The City of Roanoke Department of Social Services has submitted its PIP to Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). The plan requires much more intensive involvement by foster care staff in the delivery of services. Increased collaboration with foster children, birth families and foster families is an essential part of the plan. The CFSR conducted on a national level has shown that the relationship between social worker visits with these parties has a high

correlation with increased well-being of foster children. The Child Welfare League of America, and the American Public Human Service Association have documented the need to reduce child welfare caseloads. The recommended caseload size ranges from eight to twelve children. The City averages about 16 foster care cases per social worker, when we are fully staffed at our present staff complement. Due to high demands and stress related to the job, our foster care social work staff has turned over at an alarming rate during the past year to year and a half, and there have been vacancies on a nearly constant basis. The lack of stability in our workforce is contributing to our inability to fully meet the CFSR performance standards. Social workers also need strong supervisory support and training in order to effectively meet these standards and advance their job skills. Present supervisory units have about eight staff (including support staff); however, six staff per unit is the recommended size.

The local PIP allocation of \$195,131 will fund the salaries and benefits for four additional social workers and one social work supervisor. Positions will not be filled before August 1, 2005, so salary costs will only accrue for eleven months in FY 2006. This will enable the PIP allocation to cover start up costs for equipment purchases. The hiring of these staff will reduce foster care caseloads to an average of about 13 children per social worker. Supervisors will have about seven staff in their units.

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize the Department of Social Services to increase staff complement by four full-time social workers (grade 11) and one full time social work supervisor (grade 13).

Adopt the accompanying budget ordinance which establishes a revenue estimate in the General Fund in the amount of \$156,105, transfers funding of \$39,026 from City Manager Contingency (001-300-9410-2199), and appropriates funding totaling \$195,131 for the Department of Social Services as detailed below.

001-630-5314-1002 (Regular Employee Salaries)	146,363
001-630-5314-1105 (City Retirement)	18,456
001-630-5314-1120 (FICA)	12,215
001-630-5314-1130 (Life Insurance)	1,820
001-630-5314-2020 (Telephone)	2,000
001-630-5314-2035 (Expendable Equipment)	11,000
001-630-5314-2044 (Training and Development)	3,277

Respectfully submitted,



Darlene L. Burcham  
City Manager

DLB:tem

c: Mary F. Parker, City Clerk  
William M. Hackworth, City Attorney  
Jesse A. Hall, Director of Finance  
Sherman M. Stovall, Director of Management and Budget  
Jane R. Conlin, Director of Human/Social Services  
Rolanda B. Russell, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

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